

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 SS-15 INR-07 /052 W
-----096644 062058Z /63

R 062033Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9948

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 29443

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS:XG UK FR OCON
SUBJ: ANNUAL FRANCO/AMERICAN CONSULTATION ON EAST ASIA

REF: PARIS 27641

1. ASIA DIRECTOR NOIVILLE CONFIRMED THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL CONSULTATION BEGINNING AT 10 A.M. MONDAY, OCT 24, LUNCHEON HOSTED BY THE QUAI, AND CONTINUED TALKS IN THE AFTERNOON. GERGORIN HAS CONFIRMED THE DINNER INVITATION FOR THE EVENING OF OCT 24 FOR MR. AND MRS. HOLBROOKE. THE APPOINTMENT WITH FRANCOIS-PONCET IS NOW ARRANGED FOR 0830 A.M. TUESDAY, OCT 25. THE REST OF THE DAY IS LEFT FREE.

2. NOIVILLE SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT THE NATURE OF THE CONSULTATIONS WOULD CHANGE SLIGHTLY THIS YEAR. SINCE HE HAS NOW BEEN ASIAN DIRECTOR FOR SLIGHTLY OVER TWO YEARS AND HAS ALREADY GONE THROUGH TWO CONSULTATIONS, HE IS PRETTY MUCH AWARE OF HOW THE US VIEWS MOST ASIAN COUNTRIES AND CONSIDERS OUR APPRAISALS RATHER SIMILAR. ALSO, NOW THAT THE INDOCHINA CONFLICT IS OVER, THERE ARE FEWER TENSIONS IN US/FRENCH RELATIONS CONCERNING ASIA, AND WE CAN BE MORE FRANK. HE THEREFORE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE THIS YEAR IF THE CONSULTATIONS WERE LESS A TOUR D'HORIZON OF ALL THE COUNTRIES IN THE AREA, COMPARING BASICALLY SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS, AND MORE
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"PROBLEM-ORIENTED." THEREBY THESE TALKS WOULD BE MORE OPERATIONAL THAN THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST. IN PARTICULAR HE THOUGHT THAT THERE MAY BE SOME AREAS OF COOPERATION WHICH WE COULD DISCUSS.

3. NOIVILLE DID NOT RUN DOWN A CHECK LIST OF "PROBLEMS" OR "OPERATIONS", BUT WE SHALL TRY TO GET SOME

INDICATIONS FROM HIM OR HIS SUBORDINATES ABOUT SOME OF THE SUBJECTS THE FRENCH WILL RAISE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE FRENCH MAY INCLUDE: THE CHINESE PROGRAM OF SEEKING WESTERN TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING MILITARY TECHNOLOGY, AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WEST (FRANCE MAY BE PARTICULARLY INVOLVED); JAPAN'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC MATTERS AND WAYS OF HANDLING TRADE PROBLEMS; VIETNAM'S INTENTIONS IN LAOS, CAMBODIA, THAILAND, AND ASEAN IN GENERAL; THE IMPORTANCE OF PRC/SRV FRICTIONS, PARTICULARLY IF CHINA MOVES AHEAD WITH PETROLEUM EXPLORATION IN THE PARACELS; WHETHER ANYTHING CAN BE DONE, PERHAPS THROUGH THE CHINESE, TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA (THE POL POT TRIP TO PEKING MAY PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO SOME NEW POSSIBILITIES.

4. THE FRENCH WILL, OF COURSE, WISH TO HEAR ABOUT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE PRC AND OUR ANALYSIS OF THE CHINA SCENE TO HELP MAKE THE BARRE VISIT A SUCCESS. THEY WILL BE INTERESTED IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FILIPINOS OVER BASES AND THE RESULTS OF THE SEPTEMBER CONSULTATIONS WITH ASEAN IN MANILA. IN 1975 WE SPOKE OF THAILAND AS THE "SICK MAN" OF ASIA; THEY WILL BE INTERESTED IN OUR CURRENT APPRAISAL OF THE RTG AND ITS ABILITY TO HANDLE ITS DIPLOMATIC AND SECURITY PROBLEMS.

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5. WE HAVE FELT THAT THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN MORE INCLINED TO TAKE THAN TO GIVE IN THESE EXCHANGES -- THEY HAVE OFTEN BEEN QUITE WILLING TO GIVE US ADVICE, PERHAPS, BUT VERY RELUCTANT TO GIVE US ANY HARD INFORMATION ON THEIR ACTIONS. FRANCE'S EUROPEAN PARTNERS, PARTICULARLY THE UK AND GERMANY, HAVE ALSO COMPLAINED ABOUT FRENCH SECRECY. WE MAY WISH TO TAKE NOIVILLE AT HIS WORD CONCERNING FRANKNESS AND ASK SOME POINTED QUESTIONS

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9949

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 29443

ABOUT MATTERS WHERE THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT IN THE PAST TO COME CLEAN. TOPICS COULD INCLUDE: FRANCE'S PAST AND PROJECTED INVOLVEMENT IN PRC TECHNOLOGY, PARTICULARLY NUCLEAR AND MISSILE; FRANCO/GERMAN COMPETITION FOR THE CHINESE MARKET; THE REAL STATUS OF FRENCH RELATIONS WITH THE SRV OVER FRENCH BUSINESSES IN SVN AND THE FRENCH APPRAISAL OF THE SRV'S ABILITY TO ABSORB AID; THE CAPABILITY OF THE FRENCH CONSULATE GENERAL IN SAIGON TO PROVIDE RELIABLE INFORMATION CONCERNING SVN; FRENCH DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRC CONCERNING INDOCHINA.

6. AS FOR FRENCH COOPERATION WITH THE US CONCERNING ASIA, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION BOTH IN ASIA AND IN THE RESPECTIVE CAPITALS. MANY FRENCH AMBASSADORS (THOSE CURRENTLY IN PEKING AND BANGKOK ARE APPARENTLY NOTABLE EXAMPLES) HAVE INHIBITED RATHER THAN ENCOURAGED COOPERATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FRENCH HAVE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN RECEIVING FBIS AND JPRS MATERIALS, BUT WE HAVE NEVER RESPONDED TO THEIR REQUEST. THE QUAI IS NOW PROVIDING US WITH THEIR SAIGON CONSULATE GENERAL'S SUMMARY OF THE LOCAL PRESS; WE GATHER THAT IT IS NO LONGER REALLY USEFUL FOR THE US, BUT WE HAVE NOT TOLD THE QUAI TO DISCONTINUE THE SERVICE. IF NOIVILLE WISHES TO GO BEYOND FAIRLY INNOCUOUS
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UNCLASSIFIED EXCHANGES, WE SHOULD KNOW WHAT WE WANT AND WHAT WE ARE PREPARED TO GIVE.

7. NOIVILLE'S PROPOSAL, IF ACTUALLY IMPLEMENTED, WOULD REPRESENT A MORE FORTHCOMING FRENCH APPROACH THAN WE HAVE SEEN IN THE RECENT PAST. IF THERE ARE SOME PARTICULAR PROBLEMS WHICH WE WISH TO RAISE WITH THE FRENCH, WE MIGHT PERHAPS SIGNAL THEM TO NOIVILLE. THIS ADVANCE WARNING WOULD NOT ALTER THE USUAL CUSTOM OF HAVING AN OPEN AGENDA PERMITTING EACH SIDE TO RAISE WHAT IT WISHES.

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